

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR
REVIEWED BY *[Signature]* DATE 3-13-81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

EXCISE

SMITH VELMA T
79 STATE 39053

08/21/80 191938 PRINTER: LI

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 039053 TOSEC 010028
FOLLOWING REPEAT KABUL 1118 ACTION STATE INFO ISLAMABAD FEB 15.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1118
E.O. 12065: GDS 2-15-85 (AMSTUTZ, J. BRUCE) OR-M
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, AF
SUBJ: DEATH OF AMBASSADOR DUES: SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS
1. WHILE OUR MEMORIES OF YESTERDAY'S TRAGEDY ARE STILL FRESH,
I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE OUR PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS REGARDING
TWO QUESTIONS. THESE ARE: WHO ORDERED THE FORCED BREAK-IN
OF THE HOTEL ROOM WHERE AMBASSADOR DUES WAS BEING HELD; AND
WHY WAS THAT DECISION TAKEN?
2. WHO GAVE THE ORDER? -CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE POINTS TO
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN.
THE BEHAVIOR OF POLICE COMMANDANT TAROON AT THE INTERIOR
MINISTRY, THE STATEMENTS OF AFGHAN POLICE OFFICERS TO OUR
OFFICERS AT THE HOTEL, AND AMIN'S BEHAVIOR IN REFUSING TO
SPEAK TO ME OR SEE MY OFFICER WOERZ, POINT TO HIS BEING THE
DECISION MAKER. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT IT WAS TARAKI, BUT,
IN THE POWER EQUATION HERE, HE SEEMS MORE AND MORE TO BE A
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FIGUREHEAD IN THIS GOVERNMENT. IT MAY HAVE BEEN TAROON, YET
HE ACTED DURING MUCH OF THE TIME AS IF UNDER ORDERS, AND
EARLIER HE HAD GIVEN ME ASSURANCES HE WOULD TAKE NO PRECIPITOUS
ACTION WITHOUT CONSULTING ME. FURTHERMORE, HE HAD EARLIER
IN THE DAY TOLD ONE OF OUR OFFICERS THAT HE ALSO FAVORED
PATIENCE. AS FOR HIS BOSS, INTERIOR MINISTER WATANJAR, HE
SEEMS TO BE A WEAKLING, AND APPEARS TO HAVE LITTLE SAY OVER
INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS.
3. ON FEBRUARY 15, SECURITY OFFICER BOLES MET WITH COMMANDANT
OF POLICE TAROON. DURING THE DISCUSSION, BOLES ASKED TAROON
WHO MADE THE DECISION TO FORCIBLY ENTER THE ROOM. TAROON
REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A JOINT DECISION MADE BY SECURITY AND
INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS. WHEN BOLES ASKED WHO WAS ULTIMATELY
RESPONSIBLE TAROON REPEATED THAT IT WAS A JOINT DECISION WHICH
HE HIMSELF HAD PARTICIPATED IN AND SUPPORTED.
4. COMMENT: PERHAPS HE IS RIGHT, BUT WE STILL BELIEVE AMIN
MUST HAVE PLAYED A CRUCIAL DECISION ROLE.

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5. WHY WAS THE DECISION TO USE FORCE MADE? THERE ARE TWO POSSIBILITIES: ONE IS THAT THE SOVIETS, WHO WERE ADVISING THE POLICE CLOSELY AT THE HOTEL AND IN TAROON'S OFFICE, WERE RESPONSIBLE. SOME OF MY INFORMED STAFF SEEM TO RECALL THAT THE TACTIC OF A BLUNT, RUTHLESS DISPLAY OF FORCE IS THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET METHOD FOR DEALING WITH DISSIDENT AND TERRORIST SITUATIONS, BUT THE SOVIETS HAVE LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN HANDLING KIDNAPPING OR HOSTAGE RETRIEVING SITUATIONS. MEMBERS OF THE USG STAFF AT THE HOTEL JUST BEFORE THE BREAK-IN OCCURRED SAW SOVIETS GIVING ADVICE, SPECIAL WEAPONRY, AND SIGNALS TO THE AFGHAN AUTHORITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE THE OFT-REPEATED COMMENTS OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY SECURITY CHIEF TO ONE OF OUR OFFICERS AT THE HOTEL THAT PATIENCE AND

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TIME WERE IN HIS OPINION THE WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE TERRORISTS. AT ONE POINT, THIS SOVIET OFFICIAL APPEARED TO HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN DELAYING THE SCHEDULED ATTACK. AT THE MOMENT WE JUST DON'T KNOW CLEARLY THE SOVIET ROLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, BUT WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT SOVIET ADVISORS WERE INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN EVENTS AT THE KABUL HOTEL AS WELL AS AT THE INTERIOR MINISTRY.

6. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, IS THAT THE DECISION TO USE FORCE WAS MADE BY AMIN OR HIS COHORTS FOR PURELY DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES. AMIN AND COMPANY ARE RUTHLESS PEOPLE. THEIR RECORD OVER THE LAST TEN MONTHS CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THEY ARE NOT AVERSE TO EXECUTING SUMMARILY HUNDREDS OF PERSONS, TO TORTURING SUSPECTS, AND TO THROWING THOUSANDS INTO JAIL FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. AS AMIN TOLD WHITE HOUSE ADVISOR THORNTON AND US JUST LAST MONTH, "LIKE THE CUBANS, WE ALLOW NO OPPOSITION."

7. IN YESTERDAY'S AFFAIR, THE TERRORISTS WERE TRYING TO USE AMBASSADOR DUBS AS HOSTAGE FOR THE RELEASE OF THREE POLITICAL PRISONERS. WE HAVE HAD SOME SUCCESS IN IDENTIFYING TWO OF THESE PRISONERS, WHO ARE SHIA RELIGIOUS LEADERS, ARRESTED TWO WEEKS AGO. ALTHOUGH AMIN AT THE AIRPORT YESTERDAY, FEBRUARY 14, AND TAROON TODAY, CLAIMED THERE WAS ONLY ONE POLITICAL PRISONER NAMED BAHRUDDIN BAHES, AND THAT HIS WHEREABOUTS WERE UNKNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT, THIS APPEARS A FALLACY

8. WHAT IS PLAUSIBLE IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT, FOLLOWING ITS PAST PRACTICE OF ACTING RUTHLESSLY TO CRUSH ALL OPPOSITION, WAS DETERMINED AGAIN IN THIS INSTANCE TO ELIMINATE PROMPTLY THESE TERRORISTS, AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHER OPPOSITIONISTS, AND PERHAPS ALSO, TO PREVENT PUBLICITY IN THE WORLD PRESS ABOUT THE ABOVE-MENTIONED POLITICAL PRISONERS. HENCE ANY CONSIDERATION FOR THE WELFARE OF AMBASSADOR DUBS WAS SECONDARY.

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9. HOWEVER, IN FAIRNESS TO THE AFGHANS, IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT AMIN (AND HIS ADVISORS) THOUGHT THE CHANCES MINIMAL OF AMBASSADOR DUBS BEING HARMED IN THE RUSH ON THE ROOM. THIS WAS CERTAINLY THE LINE TAKEN BY TAROON'S OFFICE WITH US, BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND BY POLICE OFFICIALS AT THE HOTEL. (ONE HIGH POLICE OFFICIAL ON THE SCENE TOLD POLCOONS FLATIN THAT THE POLICE THOUGHT THE RISK TO THE AMBASSADOR WAS "LESS THAN ONE PERCENT." FLATIN REBUTTED THIS, CITING THAT OUR EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER SUCH INCIDENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD INDICATED THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S CHANCES OF SURVIVING SUCH AN ONSLAUGHT WERE NIL.)

10. THERE IS A THIRD POSSIBILITY. DURING BOLES FEB. 15 CONVERSATION WITH TAROON, BOLES ASKED WHY THE DECISION TO STORM THE ROOM WAS TAKEN AFTER REPEATED US PLEAS FOR PATIENCE. TAROON REPLIED, "FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S SAFETY." TAROON ADDED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE OF COURSE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE OPERATION. ALSO, ON FEB. 15, FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL MANDOZAI TOLD A/DCM FLATIN THAT THE DECISION TO BREAK-IN WAS DUE TO THE TERRORISTS' THREAT TO KILL THE AMBASSADOR "IN TEN MINUTES." THE POLICE DECIDED, HE SAID, THAT THEY HAD NO OPTION THAN TO ACT IMMEDIATELY TO SAVE THE AMBASSADOR. MANDOZAI QUIETLY OFFERED HIS OWN PERSONAL OPINION THAT THE POLICE ARE INADEQUATELY TRAINED AND TOO ACTION PRONE.

11. IN SUM, THERE ARE THREE POSSIBILITIES. WE SUSPECT ALL ELEMENTS OF ALL THESE WERE INVOLVED BUT GIVE GREATEST WEIGHT TO THE DRA'S ACTING ON THE BASIS OF A DESIRE TO CRUSH IMMEDIATELY THIS DRAMATIC EVIDENCE OF OPPOSITION.

12. ON A SIDE POINT, BOLES ALSO ASKED TAROON HOW THE FOURTH
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TERRORIST WAS CAUGHT. TAROON REPLIED THAT ALL FOUR WERE KILLED IN THE SHOOTOUTS. THIS, OF COURSE, IS NOT TRUE AS EMBASSY OFFICERS AT THE SCENE, SAW ONLY THREE TERRORISTS, ONE OF WHOM, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WAS TAKEN AWAY UNHARMED IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE SHOOTING.

13. WE ARE TRYING TO GATHER MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED HERE AND WILL REPORT ACCORDINGLY. THE ABOVE ACCOUNT STANDS AS OUR CURRENT BEST ASSESSMENT.
AMSTUTZ UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER
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